1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 614 615 The elders of the villages can actually often give the names of each of the gods whom they say that each of the five Bison-horn phratries worships: the Markami phratry worships Harma Pen; the Kuhrami phratry give varying names for their god, Hermraj Pen, Perambhoi (the name applied by the Dorlas to their corresponding Perambhoi phratry) or Banian Muttai; the Kawasi phratry worships Babo Herma Pen; the Marvi phratry Handa Kosa Pen; and the Sodi phratry Tul-Muttai Pen, whose *pen-rawar* is at Kamkanar in the Gangalur *pargana* in Bijapur tahsil, where Sodi Harma the *mokdul-waddai*, was regarded as the headman of all the surrounding Bison-horn villages. But other names are also given, such as Hirangraj, Hingaraj and Belraj for the Kartami clan, Hirmaraj for the Kawasi, Sodi, Markami and Marvi clans, and Hing-hunga and Mundaraj for the Beko and Kalmu clans. I have used the word 'clan' advisedly, because in this list some gods are shared by clans belonging to different phratries; thus Hirmaraj is shared by the Markami and Kartami clans of the Markami phratry and by the Sodi and Marvi clans of the Sodi and Marvi phratries, while of the worshippers of Hing-hunga and Mundaraj the Beko clan belongs to the Kuhrami phratry and the Kalmu clan to the Markami. Use Modia Pen of Ghotpal is restricted to the Lekami clan of that and surrounding villages, which is now considered part of the Kuhrami phratry. Other local log-gods will be found in the heart of the Bison-horn country at such places as Dugeli; some may be the true *pen-rawars* of the phratries, but I have been unable to verify this.

614 615 173 The whole position is, it must be admitted, somewhat confused, but it would be wrong to expect to systematize it. The same confusion will be found again over the totems of the phratries and clans; there are two phratries with the tortoise as totem, and inside the same phratry will be found clans with totems of their own or the totem of other phratries, or no totem at all. The traditions of the Bison-horn Marias all point to their having descended southwards from the Abujhmar hills to colonize their present country, and the presence in their midst of ruined Hindu cities at Dantewara, Barsur, and Bhairamgarh, of traces of forgotten kingdoms at Tirathgarh and Kuakonda, and of isolated villages of Jhari Telangas descended from the subjects of early medieval Telugu kings, point to the truth of the traditions. We have seen how new clans are forming to-day on the southern fringes of the Abujhmar hills, and how the Bison-horn culture is gradually absorbing the southernmost Hill Maria clans, which have, however, not fitted themselves fully as yet into the five-phratry organization, but retain their own clan-gods. The five phratries are named after five principal clans,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the names of which recur not only among Murias in north Bastar, but also among all the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Possibly strong bodies of these clans were the original colonizers, and with the growth of population in their new surroundings have either thrown off sub-clans or absorbed clans newly descending from the hills or acquiring their culture. It is not surprising that settlers in the tracts farthest from their first settlement should find it difficult to worship at the original shrines of their *pen*, and should either forget them, or here and there make fresh log-gods for themselves, perhaps sharing them with other adjacent clans not necessarily of their own phratries, just as they have learnt, unlike the Hill Marias, to share with other brother-clans and wife-clans village lands which are the *bhum* of their own clan.

The cult of the *pen* log-god of the clan is thus, as may be expected, considerably weaker among the Bison-horn than among the Hill Marias. Often he is neglected almost entirely in the annual feasts, or vaguely associated with the Departed in the expressions *pen-hanal* or *dhums-deo* used of the ancestors. Where there is a log-god, he tends to be regarded merely as one of the local godlings that are becoming as numerous among the Bison-horn Marias as among the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Where there is none, occasionally at festivals before the Village Mother or other manifestations of the Earth a stone or two may be set up in his name under a *saje* tree and receive its share of the sacrificial blood and libations. It is not surprising that, therefore, the *waddai* of the clan-god is more purely a medium among the Bison-horn Marias, and less of a clan-priest than he is among the Hill Marias, and that most Bison-horn villages have at least one *waddai* who may be possessed not only by the clan-god but by other godlings also; even when he is attached definitely to a log-god at a festival, he may be possessed by him and give oracle on his behalf, but the *pusma* of the village is the principal celebrant, and the *waddai*, when not possessed, degenerates into a mere *mantram*-reciting assistant of the *pusma*.

Often there is no hut-temple for any deity among the Bison-horn Marias except one for Danteshwari Mai or Maoli or Mata, whose cults have spread from the Hindu temple of Dantewara, and in time will reach every village of Bastar. The Earth cult, however, remains, as among the Hill Marias, the essential cult. Its chief form is thus the cult of the Village Mother, called Tallin Ochur in the Bison-horn dialect. For all the village ceremonies there is a fixed plot of land in a field belonging to the *pusma* and known as the *bhum-jaga*, *hadvi-bera* or *wijj-erku*; *bhum-jaga*

The Village Mother and other gods among the Bison-horn Murias

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142 epicanthic fold were found in one or both eyes. Among the Hill Muria observed at Markabera, light brown skin colour, high cheek bones and the unmistakable presence of the epicanthic fold were also noticed.

144 'Taking all the characters together, I am inclined to the view that the Muria are not different from the Bhil of the Vindhyan ranges measured by me and belong essentially to what we have termed the Proto-Australoid group. While this is really the basic-type, it is possible that they have absorbed a little of the blood of a finer racial type (as a result probably of their contact with higher caste Hindus across the Godavari) as shown in the occasional occurrences of a longish face, thin lips, prominent chin and well-developed prominent nose. In addition there is unmistakably a Mongoloid element, though very small, and it appears to be more marked in the Hill Maria and the Muria of the foothills than the Muria of the plains. How exactly this has to be accounted for, remains to be seen but I am inclined to agree with Hutton that the intrusion probably came from the eastern coastal regions.'

V. Muria Migrations

174 As we have seen, there are probably at least three different elements in the composition of the Muria tribe. The first is the Hill Maria migration from the mountains into the hills and forests of the south and east, from which has emerged the Jhoria of today. The second is a probable migration of Gond from the Central Provinces into the northern parganas, to which testify common traditions, the legend of Lingo and the continued intermarriage between Kanker Gond and Bastar Muria. The third element is that of east Kondagaon, which may represent the true Bastar autochthon, where the Muria —having been longer in the country than the others—have lost more of their original customs and language.

● 173 All three elements have traditions of migrations from Warangal in the south and Lanji-Dhamda in the north. Many try to blend the two.

Warangal is, of course, the original home of the ruling family of Bastar, whose ancestors reigned there from about A.D. 1150 to 1425. This Kakatiya family was probably originally feudatory to the Chalukya kings and only later ruled independently. 'Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had been an outlying and loosely-held group of feudal dependencies of Warangal.'[1]

It will be of interest to give a few of the stories still current in Muria villages. Suko Manjhi told me at Bandopal that his family first lived in Lanji-Dhamda and then went to Warangal. In Warangal, he went on,

> The Raja was one day going to court when Danteshwari Mai appeared to him in a vision saying, 'Where are you going?' The Raja replied, 'To my court'. The goddess said, 'This is not your court, nor your kingdom. I will show you where your real kingdom is; if you stay here both house and kingdom will be lost. Come with me; you go ahead and I will follow, but do not look behind; your kingdom will extend as far as you can go!' The Raja went on and on into Bastar and up as far as the Pairi river where there is now the Kanker boundary. As he went along he listened all the time to the sound of Danteshwari

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 3.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Mai's anklets, but as they were crossing the river some sand got into them and she stopped to clean them. When the music of the anklets ceased, the Raja turned round to see what was the matter. Danteshwari was very angry and cried, 'You have disobeyed me. You might have been the greatest of all kings, but now your kingdom must stop here.' 173

Bhikari Muria, the Gaita of Kerawahi, gave a different account:

> Our ancestors came from Warangal driven by hunger and thirst, and were searching for a home and food to live. Seven brothers reached Jarandi village and slept near a threshing-floor. The next morning they saw a great heap of kodon chaff. Their wives examined it and found there was still much grain left there, so they told their husbands to fetch bullocks from the village. The brothers each gathered a bin full of grain and went to the villagers saying, 'Look, how much grain we have found, take it, for it is yours'. But the villagers said, 'No, we had thrown away the chaff, and there was no grain there; what you have got is a gift of the gods'. Then with what they had found the seven brothers scattered in the villages of Otenda, Jarandi, Magenda, Kerawahi, Bandasemal, Umargaon and Uridgaon. These were the first Muria villages. The brothers were of the Kawachi clan and these villages are their *bhum* (clan-territory).

This story comes from the east of the State. Many of the accounts given in the west describe how the Muria first settled in the Abujhmar and were originally Maria. Eighty-year-old Bindo of Benur, for example, describes how,

> My ancestors lived in Warangal. One of them had a dream. The god Raja Dokara appeared to him and told him to go to Bastar, for the god himself was going there. So my ancestor followed the god and settled at Teknar in the land of the Maria.
>
> Some time later my ancestor went to the lowlands to buy bullocks. The Maria there said to him, 'Come and live with us here and we will make you our leader'. My ancestor agreed to do so, but when he returned to Teknar to fetch his belongings, the Maria would not let him go.
>
> But after a time, Danteshwari Mai appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Come down to the lowlands and I will help you; I will give you a Maria wife and will make you the chief of the village'. When he heard this, my ancestor left Teknar and came to settle in Benur. Here the Maria gave him a wife and he became one of them and the chief of that village.

In Sidhawand, a Muria village on the Kanker border, the headman, who belongs to the Kasai Maravi clan, said that his ancestors came from Garha-Mandla,[1] but where this was he could not say.

The tradition of a migration from Lanji-Dhamda[2] is vaguer and less detailed than that of the royal pilgrimage from Warangal. Yet it persists. Bara Pen

[1] Garha and Mandla are often mentioned together as if they were one place. Mandla was the capital of the Gond Raja, Hirde Shah, from 1650 to 1706, after which the Gond Rajas were known as 'kings of Garha-Mandla' until the kingdoms collapsed before the Marathas.

[2] Lanji is also connected with ancient Gond history. A Rajput adventurer—according to one tradition—named Jadhu Rai took service in the court of one of the original Gond Rajas at Lanji and, marrying his daughter, occupied the throne and thus started the Gond

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

● 173 was born from a stone in Lanji-Dhamda. The Poyami Gaita at Jamkot claimed that 'the Poyami clan came from Dhamda, but is now scattered everywhere'. In Ulera and neighbouring villages the Muria said that they were really Gond from Lanji-Dhamda and that they intermarried with Kanker and Jeypore Gond.

Rajput dynasty which continued for hundreds of years. In comparatively modern times a fort was built at Lanji by one of the Gond Rajas of Garha-Mandla. 'While engaged in the excavations, a spirit appeared who declared herself to be the goddess Lanjkoi and she promised to constitute herself protectrix of the fort, provided a human sacrifice was yearly offered at her shrine. It was consequently named after her. Many years later, Chimanjee Bhonsla on his Cuttack expedition took the Lanjee road. He saw and valued the position of the fort and erected a small temple in honour of Lanjkoi. Though human sacrifices are not now offered, the Gond Raja of Kawurdah, on visiting the Nagpore Exhibition in 1865, found it necessary to sacrifice goats at the shrine that his ancestors had dedicated to Lanjkoi.'—A. J. Lawrence, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Bhandara District* (Bombay, 1867), p. 29.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

to death.[1] Tallur Muttai asks him to marry her, but he refuses and runs away to Semurgaon, where 'being weary' he turns into a stone, and has ever since been worshipped.

This rather tedious account yet gives an exact picture of the working of the Muria's mind when he turns it to theology The distribution of the gods probably represents very ancient migrations of the tribe. As the different Muria families moved here and there, it was necessary that their gods also should move and, in order to emphasize the unity of the tribe, should be related to one another. A Pus Kolang chant sung by the chelik of Phulpar gives a good picture of the multiplicity, variety and confusion of the Muria pantheon.

Aho revaloyo revala vav loyo vav loyo aha revala!

O the sixteen divisions of the earth,
The nine divisions of the sky!
Who is lord of the earth?
The lord of the earth is Tallur Rai.
Give him a good Johar.

O the hoar-frost and Pati Pen!
Give him a good Johar.

O the tiger and Kadrengal!
Give him a good Johar.

Oho the red Sun like a blazing log
Oho the haldi-coloured Moon!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in a corner is the bed,
In the midst is the ocean
Nearby is the Kutala.
Oho the many baby stars!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in the ghotul Madan Matai Rai!
In the village Jamadevia Meta!
Oho Nelo Maria Rai!
Give him a good Johar.

[1] For a full account of the Lingo legend, see Chapter VIII.